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Amendments to the claims.

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the application:

Listing of the claims

Claim 1 (currently amended): A nucleic acid molecule coding for a fusion protein comprising a first polypeptide which ~~has the autoproteolytic function of an autoprotease N^{pro} of a pestivirus~~ is a pestivirus autoprotease N^{pro} or a derivative thereof having the autoproteolytic activity of a pestivirus autoprotease N^{pro}, and a second polypeptide which is ~~connected~~ covalently bound to the first polypeptide at the C-terminus of the first polypeptide in a manner such that the second polypeptide is capable of being cleaved from the fusion protein by the autoproteolytic activity of the first polypeptide, and where the second polypeptide is a heterologous polypeptide.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A nucleic acid molecule according to claim 1, wherein the pestivirus is selected from the group consisting of CSFV, BDV and BVDV classical swine fever virus, border disease virus, and bovine viral diarrhea virus.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A nucleic acid molecule according to claim 2, wherein the pestivirus is CSFV classical swine fever virus.

Claim 4 (currently amended): A nucleic acid molecule according to claim 3, wherein the first polypeptide comprises the following amino acid sequence:

MELNHFELLYKTSKQKPVGVVEEPVYDTAGRPLFGNPSEVHPQSTLKLPHDRGRGDIRTTLRDL
PRKGDRCRSGNHLGPVSGIYIKPGPVYYQDYTGVPVYHRAPLEFFDEAQFCEVTKRIGRVTGSDG
KLYHIYVCVDGCILLKLAKRGTPRTLKWIRNFTNCPLWVTSC - (168) (SEQ ID NO: 1),

~~or the amino acid sequence of a derivative thereof with autoproteolytic activity.~~

Claim 5 (currently amended): A nucleic acid molecule according to claim 3 1, wherein the first polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence corresponding to the amino acid sequence Glu22 to Cys168 of the autoprotease N^{pro} of CSFV classical swine fever virus or a derivative thereof with having the autoproteolytic activity of the autoprotease N^{pro} of classic swine fever virus, wherein said first polypeptide has a Cys as C-terminus, wherein the first polypeptide additionally has a Met as N-terminus, and wherein the heterologous polypeptide is ~~connected~~ covalently bound directly to the amino acid Cys168 of the autoprotease N^{pro} of CSFV said C-terminal Cys.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A nucleic acid molecule according to claim 3 1, wherein the first polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence corresponding to the amino acid sequence

Pro17 to Cys168 of the autoprotease N^{pro} of ~~CSFV~~ classical swine fever virus or a derivative thereof with having the autoproteolytic activity of the autoprotease N^{pro} of classic swine fever virus, wherein said first polypeptide has a Cys as C-terminus, wherein the first polypeptide additionally has a Met as N-terminus, and wherein the heterologous polypeptide is ~~connected covalently bound~~ directly to ~~the amino acid Cys168 of the autoprotease N^{pro} of CSFV~~ said C-terminal Cys.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A nucleic acid molecule according to ~~anyone of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid molecule is a DNA molecule.

Claim 8 (currently amended): An expression vector which is compatible with a predefined bacterial host cell, comprising a nucleic acid molecule according to ~~anyone of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, and at least one expression control sequence.

Claim 9 (original): An expression vector according to claim 8, wherein the bacterial host cell is an E. coli cell.

Claim 10 (currently amended): An expression vector according to ~~either of claims 8 or claim 9~~ claim 8, wherein the expression vector is a plasmid.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A bacterial host cell comprising a vector according to ~~anyone of claims 8 to 10~~ claim 8.

Claim 12 (original): A bacterial host cell according to claim 11, wherein the host cell is an E. coli cell.

Claim 13 (cancelled).